

**News Release**

Diabetes Prevention &amp; Control Program

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**Utah Health Care Plans Partner for Diabetes***Utah Partnership Example of Health System Reform for Nation*

(Salt Lake City, UT) – Utah’s innovative partnership between the Utah Department of Health (UDOH), eight major health care plans, and HealthInsight has received national attention. Dr. Ann Albright, Director of the Division of Diabetes Translation at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), highlighted the program during a recent address to the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Energy and Commerce, Subcommittee on Health.

Between 2004 and 2009, the Utah Health Plan Partnership (HPP) improved all measures that affect quality and length of life for plan members with diabetes, including:

- increase in average blood glucose control (A1c <7%) from 23% to 43%;
- increase in lipid control from 18% to 45%;
- increase in rates of documented eye exams from 42% to 64%; and
- increase in screening to assess kidney function from 33% to 69%.

Fewer than a handful of states have been able to bring key players from major health plans together to address diabetes prevention and management. Partnership members are the UDOH Diabetes Prevention and Control Program (DPCP), UDOH Heart Disease and Stroke Prevention Program, Altius, Molina Health Care of Utah, Public Employees Health Plan, Regence BlueCross BlueShield of Utah, SelectHealth, UnitedHealthcare of Utah, University of Utah Health Care (Healthy U), Utah Medicaid and HealthInsight.

Albright told Congress that the Utah HPP, funded by CDC, stands out as an example of applying the best diabetes science into practical strategies at the state level to control and prevent diabetes among Utahns. HDSPP, as the newest member of the team, plans to use the same approach to lower the rates of heart disease and stroke in Utah.

“The sharing of strategies among health plans has led to improvements and efficiencies in

outreach to our members, as well as providers, regarding their patients,” said Russ Elbel, Quality Improvement Manager for University of Utah Health Care. “As a result, we have experienced improved exam rates over time for our members who have diabetes.”

The Partnership’s success came as the health plans worked together to:

- increase patient and provider awareness of key clinical targets and indicators for diabetes;
- increase systems-based support for the delivery of diabetes care and the measurement, tracking, and reporting of key health indicators; and
- implement patient reminder/call back systems that focus on key health indicators and medication adherence.

An example of Utah HPP projects includes the development of a patient feedback form that eye care providers can use to communicate results of retinal eye exams to the patient’s primary care provider.

“When the health plans combine efforts, innovation, and resources, we are all much more successful in addressing the health needs of our community,” said Lynette Hansen, Quality Improvement Manager for Altius Health Plans. “Not only are we more effective in reaching individuals, but we also receive greater cooperation from physicians and the medical community.”

"This Partnership is truly unique in that these health plans are competitors who have united for the good of their communities and for the improved health of their members," said Richard Bullough, Program Manager of the UDOH DPCP.

For more information about the Utah Health Plan Partnership, visit

<http://health.utah.gov/diabetes/healthplanpartnership/>.

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*The mission of the Utah Department of Health is to protect the public's health through preventing avoidable illness, injury, disability and premature death, assuring access to affordable, quality health care, and promoting healthy lifestyles.*